

Contact: David Glasgow
(615) 783-1300

Rhea Medical Center awarded federal funding for diagnostic equipment

DAYTON, Tenn., April 23, 2010 — USDA Rural Development State Director Bobby Goode yesterday announced federal funding for diagnostic equipment at Rhea Medical Center (RMC). The announcement took place at the medical center.

"Access to good healthcare is critical to the economic health and quality of life of people who live in rural communities," said Goode. "Providing the best diagnostic facilities closer to home saves families and businesses time and money, but most important, it saves lives."

Rhea Medical CEO Ken Croom said, "The \$83,000 grant from USDA will help fund the purchase of needed equipment including a digital mammographic unit and a new bone mineral density unit."

RMC is the only facility in the region still processing mammograms on film. Digital technology provides doctors and patients with a sharper view of the patient's anatomy without waiting for film to be developed.

"Studies show that digital mammography is superior for detecting potential health risks for women," said Croom. "Reducing the processing time means that patients are more likely to keep their appointments and many more patients can be served in day."

The bone mineral density unit detects osteoporosis, which helps prevent crippling leg and back fractures. The new unit will replace an older model.

Rhea Medical Center, a county-owned, non-profit organization, is dedicated to providing patients with the highest quality health care and is accredited by the Joint Commission. The new 28-million dollar facility opened and began providing services in August 2007.
www.rheamedical.org.

Rural Development community programs finance construction or improvements to essential services like reliable access to clean water, wastewater treatment, healthcare, education, job training and first responder facilities. Loan-guarantees encourage private lenders to expand the availability of affordable financing in rural communities. Direct loans and grants create sound financial opportunities for local governments to meet essential infrastructure needs.

Others participating in the event included Sen. Bob Corker's representative David Leaverton, Rhea County Mayor Billy Ray Patton, Rural development Chattanooga Area Director Rickey Hickman and specialist David Collet.

USDA Rural Development invests in jobs, businesses, community infrastructure, homeownership and affordable rental housing in rural communities. Last year Rural Development assisted more than 866,000 Tennessee families and businesses with more than \$619 million in financial assistance through affordable loans, loan guarantees and grants.

For more information on Rural Development programs available in southeast Tennessee contact the Rural Development Area Office in Chattanooga at 423-756-2239, toll free at 1-800-342-3149 ext. 1492 or visit us online at www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn.

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